

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A packet switch, comprising:
  - a plurality of input side transfer units from which packets are entered;
  - a plurality of output side transfer units from which packets are outputted;
  - a switching unit through which each packet entered from each input side transfer unit is switched to a desired output side transfer unit;
  - a congestion status monitoring unit configured to monitor a congestion status of one of said output side transfer units to which a packet from one of said input side transfer units is destined to reach within the switching unit;
  - a priority level attaching unit configured to attach a priority level to each packet, according to the congestion status of one of said output side transfer units to which **[[a]]** the packet from one of said input side transfer units is destined to reach which is monitored by the congestion status monitoring unit; and
  - a packet selection unit configured to select one priority level attached packet that is to be transferred at a higher priority among colliding packets when a packet collision occurs within the switching unit, according to the priority level attached to each colliding packet,
    - wherein the packet with the priority level attached thereto is transferred from an input side transfer unit via the switching unit to an output side transfer unit, the switching unit transfers one colliding packet selected from colliding packets by accounting for the priority level attached to each colliding packet, at higher priority to the output side transfer unit when the packet collision occurs inside the switching unit,
    - the priority level attaching unit is provided at the input side transfer unit, and
    - when a plurality of packets constituting one datagram are to be transferred from the input side transfer unit, the priority level attaching unit sets the priority level of one packet corresponding to a top portion of said one datagram lower than the priority level of other packets corresponding to subsequent portions of said one datagram, by setting the priority level of the other packets higher than the priority level attached to packets that do not belong to said plurality of packets constituting one datagram.

2. (Currently Amended) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein the priority level attaching unit attaches a lower priority level to [[a]] the packet for which a congestion level of one of said output side transfer units to which [[a]] the packet from one of said input side transfer units is destined to reach is higher.

3. (Original) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein the priority level attaching unit is provided inside each input side transfer unit.

4. (Previously Presented) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein the priority level attaching unit sets a temporarily high priority level to one or a plurality of packets that are to be transferred to one of said output side transfer units initially when the congestion status of said one of said output side transfer units that is referred in order to attach the priority level to each packet is unknown or invalid.

5. (Currently Amended) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein the priority level attaching unit sets the priority level to be attached to each packet by referring to a congestion level table that stores a congestion level set to each prescribed one of said output side transfer units according to the congestion status monitored by the congestion status monitoring unit, the congestion level table being provided for each one or [[a]] the plurality of the input side transfer units.

6. (Original) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein the congestion status monitoring unit is provided inside each output side transfer unit.

7. (Previously Presented) The packet switch of claim 6, wherein the congestion status monitoring unit monitors the congestion status of each prescribed one of said output side transfer units for a corresponding output side transfer unit, each class of the corresponding output side transfer unit, each port of the corresponding output side transfer unit, each classes of each port of the corresponding output side transfer unit, or each flow of each class of each port of the corresponding output side transfer unit.

8. (Original) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein the congestion status monitoring unit notifies a monitored congestion status such that the monitored congestion status is reflected into the priority level attached by the priority level attaching unit.

9. (Original) The packet switch of claim 8, wherein the priority level attaching unit is provided inside each input side transfer unit, and the congestion status monitoring unit notifies a prescribed information regarding the monitored congestion status to one input side transfer unit that has transmitted one packet, at a timing of arrival of said one packet to the output side transfer unit.

10. (Currently Amended) The packet switch of claim 1, further comprising:  
a scheduling unit provided for each input side transfer unit and configured to control an order of transfers of a plurality of packets that are waiting for transfers to the switching unit at each input side transfer unit, such that ~~these~~ packets destined to non-congested one of said output side transfer units are transferred to the switching unit at higher priority by accounting for the congestion status of one of said output side transfer units to which **[[a]]** the packet from one of said input side transfer units is destined to reach.

11. (Currently Amended) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein **[[a]]** the packet with the priority level attached thereto is transferred from **[[a]]** the input side transfer unit via the switching unit to **[[a]]** the output side transfer unit, the switching unit transfers one colliding packet selected from colliding packets by accounting for the priority level attached to each colliding packet, to the output side transfer unit when **[[a]]** the packet collision occurs inside the switching unit while discarding other colliding packets inside the switching unit,

the input side transfer unit re-transmits each discarded packet when a packet discarding due to the packet collision is detected, and

the priority level attaching unit is provided at the input side transfer unit and sets the priority level to be attached to each re-transmission packet higher than the priority level originally attached to a corresponding discarded packet.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) The packet switch of claim 1, wherein each input side transfer unit transfers **[[a]]** the packet along with the congestion status inside the input side transfer unit at a time of transferring the packet via the switching unit to an output side transfer unit, and

the output side transfer unit obtains a comprehensive congestion status using the congestion status inside the input side transfer unit that is notified along with the packet and the congestion status inside the output side transfer unit, and carries out a congestion control using the comprehensive congestion status in order to control an amount or a rate of packet flows flowing through a network in which the packet switch is provided.

15. (Currently Amended) A packet switch, comprising:

a plurality of input side transfer units from which packets are entered;

a plurality of output side transfer units from which packets are outputted;

a switching unit through which each packet entered from each input side transfer unit is switched to a desired output side transfer unit, the switching unit having a configuration in which no packet collision occurs;

a congestion status monitoring unit configured to monitor a congestion status of one of said output side transfer units to which a packet from one of said input side transfer units is destined to reach within the switching unit; and

a connection pattern calculation engine configured to attach a priority level to each packet, according to the congestion status of one of said output side transfer units to which **[[a]]** the packet from one of said input side transfer units is destined to reach which is monitored by the congestion status monitoring unit, carry out a simulation for simulating a case in which each packet is assumed to be transferred through a virtual switching network having a topology in which a packet collision ~~may occur~~ is possible and a packet to be transferred at higher priority among colliding packets is selected according to the priority level attached to each colliding packet when the packet collision occurs in the virtual switching network, and determine a connection pattern for connecting the input side transfer units and the output side transfer units in the switching unit such that a result of switching packets at the switching unit coincides with a result of the simulation.

16. (Original) The packet switch of claim 15, wherein the switching unit is formed by a cross-bar switch, and the virtual switching network is a switching network formed by switching elements.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Canceled).